

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 748

By Goins

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the Lakeway Civil War Preservation Association for its efforts in preserving the historic Nenney family home in Russellville as the General Longstreet Museum.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly takes great pleasure in paying tribute to an outstanding association that acted decisively to save an historically significant home in its community from the wrecking ball and subsequently restore such house to its former glory as a Civil War museum; and

WHEREAS, upon learning of a request to rezone the 1820s Nenney family home in Russellville for commercial purposes, concerned citizens and local leaders quickly banded together to save this historically significant property, which Confederate General James Longstreet used as his headquarters during the terrible winter of 1863-1864 after the Confederate Army's aborted Knoxville Campaign; and

WHEREAS, James Longstreet (1821-1904) was one of the foremost Confederate generals of the Civil War and the principal subordinate to General Robert E. Lee, who called him his "Old War Horse"; and

WHEREAS, General Longstreet served under General Lee as a corps commander for many of the famous battles fought by the Army of Northern Virginia in the Eastern Theater, but also served with General Braxton Bragg in the Army of Tennessee in the Western Theater; he has been called "the finest corps commander in the Army of Northern Virginia ... [and] arguably the best corps commander in the conflict on either side"; and

WHEREAS, General Longstreet made significant contributions to the Confederate victories at Second Bull Run (Second Manassas), Fredericksburg, and Chickamauga, in both offensive and defensive roles; he also performed brilliantly during the Seven Days Battles, the

Battle of Antietam, and until he was seriously wounded, at the Battle of the Wilderness, but it was General Longstreet's command during the Knoxville Campaign that brought him to Russellville and the Nenney family home; and

WHEREAS, the unsuccessful Knoxville Campaign was a series of battles and maneuvers in East Tennessee during the fall of 1863 designed to secure control of the city of Knoxville and with it the railroad that linked the Confederacy east to west; the Knoxville Campaign ended following the Battle of Bean's Station, and both sides went into winter quarters during the severe winter of 1863-1864; and

WHEREAS, General Longstreet established his winter headquarters at the Nenney family home in Russellville; he and his troops did not return to Virginia until May 1864; and

WHEREAS, in order to save the Nenney family home from redevelopment, civic leaders chartered a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization known as the Lakeway Civil War Preservation Association (LCWPA) and elected a board of directors and officers; and

WHEREAS, LCWPA then made a generous offer to the property owner that was based upon a non-refundable deposit and a quick sale; after the offer was accepted, the organization secured a bank loan to purchase the property and began developing a long range plan to transform the Nenney family home into a Civil War museum; and

WHEREAS, as its journey truly began, LCWPA was ably led by its board of directors: Sheriff Esco Jarnigan; Thom Robinson, Morristown Area Chamber of Commerce; Jack Fishman, president/publisher of the *Citizen Tribune*; Bill Henderson, Hamblen County historian; Stancil Ford, chairman of the Hamblen County Commission; Larry Baker, county commissioner in whose district the Nenney home is located; Joe Swann, CPA; Ashley Taylor; Terry Davenport; Wayne Pigmon; Mike Beck; and Reece Sexton, chairman; LCWPA officers were: Mike Beck, president; Reece Sexton, vice president; Terry Davenport, secretary; and Bill Henderson, treasurer; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Baker knew the Nenney family personally and convinced a direct descendant to donate some Nenney family items for display in the museum; these items included a leather (fainting type) couch and matching leather rocker; her grandmother's riding

saddle, beautiful wedding dress, and a clock that was a wedding gift; a sewing machine; a child's rocking chair; toys; and family pictures; and

WHEREAS, the Nenney family home was constructed in two phases: the original house was built in the 1820s, and an addition in the 1840s included two large rooms downstairs and two large rooms upstairs; and

WHEREAS, the house was structurally sound, but required major repairs: new electrical wiring, plumbing, leveling the floor/foundation, repairs to walls, refinishing floors, new roof, handicap-accessible alterations, and complete painting inside and outside; and

WHEREAS, in consultation with Dr. Carroll Van West, history professor at Middle Tennessee State University, director of the Tennessee National Civil War Heritage Area, and Tennessee state historian, the LCWPA board planned and implemented the restoration plans for the General Longstreet Museum; and

WHEREAS, LCWPA decided to use the two original rooms for the Nenney furniture and other 1860s civilian displays and the two downstairs rooms in the newer addition for a Civil War communications room (the very room that General Longstreet used as a communication room) and Civil War relic displays; and

WHEREAS, Dr. West and his staff not only documented the age and authenticity of the building, they also designed professional interpretative panels for each room that relate the history of the Nenney family, the house, and the complete story of the Civil War in the Lakeway area; and

WHEREAS, LCWPA proudly held the grand opening of the General Longstreet Museum on October 13, 2011, with distinguished guests and fun activities, including Susan Whitaker, Commissioner of Tourism Development; Dr. Carroll Van West; Clark Thornton, General Longstreet's great-grandson; Morristown and Hamblen County mayors and dignitaries; a son of a Civil War veteran; a granddaughter of a soldier that served under General Longstreet at the Nenney family home; dozens of Civil War reenactors, including General Longstreet (Bill White), General Lee (David Chaltas), and General Stonewall Jackson (Danny Buckner); musket and cannon salutes; musicians; and over 100 spectators; and

WHEREAS, a gift shop/office, research library with books valued over \$5,000, public restrooms, and an upstairs apartment for the manager of the museum opened in 2012; last spring, the bedroom where General Longstreet slept was recreated, and a second relic/history room was opened; and

WHEREAS, the board of directors and officers of LCWPA have performed a vital public service by saving the Nenney family home from redevelopment and restoring the building as a museum that tells the fascinating story of the Civil War in East Tennessee, and especially Confederate General James Longstreet and his troops; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor and commend the board of directors, officers, and members of the Lakeway Civil War Preservation Association for their efforts in preserving the historic Nenney family home in Russellville as the General Longstreet Museum, join with them in observing the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LCWPA, and extend to them our thanks for a difficult job well done.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.